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THE VOTER REVIEW JOURNAL

a newsletter for local government study commissions

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February 1976

SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTIES VOTE FOR HOME RULE

As authorized by a 1973 constitutional amendment and 1975 implementing legislation, every county in South Carolina now has a chance to select one of five optional forms of county government, four of which provide for a wide range of home rule powers.

Thus far, six counties (Horry, Calhoun, Lancaster, York, Aiken and Orangeburg) have held voter referenda to determine which of the five forms will operate the county. All of these counties except Orangeburg voted in favor of forms which provide them with home rule.

Until 1975 South Carolina county governing boards could not pass their own budget, provide any new services, create special taxing districts or (without special state legislation) operate under a strong council-manager plan of government. In 10 counties, governing boards were actually appointed by legislative delegations.

The South Carolina experience differs from Montana's Voter Review in that the decision to put an optional form before the voters is itself optional. Also, voters are presented with all five forms and check off which one they want. South Carolina is the only state with this "multiple choice" method of choosing a structure; in all other states a study commission makes this main choice and gives the voters a chance to approve or disapprove their decision.

Three of the South Carolina counties (Horry, Lancaster, and Aiken) chose the Council-Administrator form which consists of an elected council of between two and 12 members with authority to hire a professional administrator to make policy recommendations and administer the day-to-day functioning of county government.

The law sets forth the powers and duties of the administrator as follows: to administer the policies and actions of the council, to prepare and submit the county budget to council for approval, to supervise the spending of county funds, to keep council informed on all financial and administrative matters, to be responsible for the hiring and firing of all county employees except those elected by law and to perform any other duties (Turn to page 2)

* * * P L A N T O A T T E N D * * *

GLASGOW TO HOST SELF-GOVERNMENT-GENERAL POWERS DEBATE

A debate and discussion on self-government and general government powers will be held in Glasgow on February 19th, at 7:30 p.m. at the Valley County Courthouse. Dick Thomas, city manager of Great Falls, will speak on self-government or home rule powers and Harold Fryslien, city manager of Bozeman, will speak on general or Dillon rule powers. Ike Knudsen, chairman of the Glasgow city study commission, personally invites all study commissioners and other interested persons to attend. This will be a good chance for study commissioners to exchange ideas. Refreshments will be served.

SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTIES...

which the council might assign.

Calhoun county chose the Council form which consists of an elected council of between three and 12 members with authority to make policies and administer the government of the county.

The council has, among other powers, the power to make contracts; the power to establish agencies, departments or commissions to assist in county administration; the power to regulate land use; the power to enact county ordinances and the power to conduct advisory elections or referenda.

York county will have a run off election between two forms: the Council-Manager form and the Council-Supervisor form. The council-manager form is like the council-administrator form except for these important differences: the council will be made up of between five and 12 members; and the county treasurer and auditor may be either elected by the voters or appointed by the council, as the council wishes. If these officials are elected, their duties and responsibilities will be as defined by existing state law. If they are appointed by council, they will be subject to the council's control.

Under the council-manager form, the duties and responsibilities of the county manager, who would be hired by the council, are exactly the same as those listed for the administrator.

The council-supervisor form consists of an elected council of between two and 12 members and an elected supervisor who will serve as council chairman and be authorized to vote only to break ties in council votes.

The supervisor will be the chief administrative officer of the county, with authority to hire and fire county employees, to supervise expenditures of county funds and executive policies and actions of the council. He will also prepare and submit the county budget to the council for approval.

Orangeburg county, in choosing the Board of Commissioners form, voted to reject home rule. This form will have a board of between four and 12 elected commissioners with authority to govern the county. The board will be required by law to meet at least once each month, and will have the following powers: to supervise all county buildings and grounds, to supervise all county employees, to purchase all necessary equipment and supplies, to hear all budget requests and submit a budget to the General Assembly for approval and to make contracts and perform other actions which may be necessary to properly govern the county. The home rule amendment also allows the board to hire a full-time clerk.

HAVRE TO PROPOSE MANAGER

The Havre (pop. 10,500) study commission has decided to propose the commission-manager form as its alternative. Chairperson Tony Hagener noted that the study commission will be on KOJM radio Wednesday, January 21st, at 7:00 p.m. to answer citizen questions on the proposed form.

Hagener said that the study commission, in its year-long study, sought to choose the form best suited to its specific area. "The commission-manager form will be a real alternative to our present form. Greater reform is possible under the form," she said. Hagener also noted that "A major purpose of Voter Review is to stimulate citizen involvement in their local government. It is important that the alternative we present promotes informed discussion."

The study commission thus far has chosen the following sub-options to be included in the form: a five member commission; overlapping terms; the chairman with the consent of the commission to appoint the members of boards; community councils may be authorized by ordinance; and, more tentatively, partisan elections, which have been a Havre tradition for over 80 years. Self-government powers will be presented as a sub-option to be voted on by the voters.

COLUMBIA FALLS UNANIMOUS
ON DISINCORPORATION

The Columbia Falls (pop. 2,650) study commission has decided unanimously to propose disincorporation to the voters in a special September 21st election, according to chairman Ray Sorenson.

Sorenson said that members of the commission would have preferred to consolidate with Flathead County, but chose disincorporation when the county study commission rejected that idea. If disincorporation is approved by the voters, the assets of Columbia Falls will be transferred to the county and the town will no longer function as a corporate entity.

The Columbia Falls study commissioners feel strongly that the town, with its low tax base and high tax rate, can no longer afford to run its government. "The cost of a police force is enough to kill a town the size of Columbia Falls," said commissioner Hi Van Allen. "We can only improve services such as roads if we disincorporate," Van Allen added.

A January 8 editorial in The Hungry Horse News says that disincorporation is an alternative to be considered. The editorial points out that Evergreen, an unincorporated town of similar size to Columbia Falls, pays less for more services. The mill levy rate for Evergreen with new schools totals 202. 253 compared to 270.643 in Columbia Falls.

Evergreen property owners pay a county road tax of 9.580 mills that isn't collected within incorporated cities. However, Columbia Falls has an 85 mill levy for city government compared to 68 in Kalispell and 67 in Whitefish. There are also special improvement taxes in each of the cities.

Evergreen has better road surfacing, and possibly better snow removal, than Columbia Falls. For that matter Hungry Horse also has county surfaced street acquired at low cost to individual property owners.

Evergreen has an excellent volunteer fire department as does Columbia Falls. There's the well funded county park board, and such situations as a water district or sewer district exist in unincorporated areas. The local library is already a county branch.

The editorial also points out that "Columbia Falls hasn't displayed much interest or confidence in its city government. Last April there weren't any candidates on the ballot for councilman on two of the three wards."

JORDAN AND WIBAUX LEANING
TOWARD DISINCORPORATION

Though the study commissions of Jordan (pop. 600) and Wibaux (pop. 800) have not finalized their decisions yet, both are leaning toward proposing the disincorporation of their respective towns.

Norma G. Hoverson, chairperson of the Jordan study commission, feels strongly that Jordan would be better off if it disincorporated. "We don't get enough for our money," Hoverson said. "Officials pride themselves on keeping the mill levy so low that we're not growing. There are no sidewalks or paved streets in Jordan. If we disincorporate, we'll be paying the county road taxes and part of those taxes will go towards improving our streets in Jordan."

Hoverson, who holds the position of deputy assessor for Garfield County of which Jordan is the county seat, noted "The reason Jordan incorporated in the first place was to get a bond issue voted on water and sewer services. In the past you needed to be an incorporated city to do that." Hoverson also pointed out that former Jordan councilmember Wren Mart, chairman of the Garfield County study commission, has been arguing for the disincorporation of Jordan for years.

Carole Frasch, chairperson of the Wibaux study commission, also feels that her town would be better off if it disincorporated. "At first I resisted the idea," Frasch said, "but it became apparent to me that disincorporation was a viable alternative." "We would get services a lot more economically if the county provided them. Wibaux is the only town in Wibaux County. There's no reason to have two sets of services," she said.

Frasch also noted that Wibaux's tax base was declining and there was little interest in running for office or in voting. Chairperson Hoverson of Jordan also emphasized this lack of citizen involvement as a reason for disincorporating. "Proposing disincorporation might wake some of the townspeople up," Hoverson said.

* * * * *

Study commissions are encouraged to contact their newspapers and radio and television stations to announce the date, time and place of each study commission meeting several days prior to the meeting. Let the public know their ideas and participation are welcome.

* * * * *

Notes From Study Commissions

1. Study commissioners in Daniels County have been working on several innovative proposals. First, the Daniels County and Scobey commissioners are exploring the manager plan and might recommend that both town and county hire the same manager on a trial basis; this arrangement has seldom been used in the country. Second, a law enforcement transfer appears to have the consensus of both the Scobey and Daniels County groups. Third, together with the Sheridan County study commission, Daniels County is looking at the prospects for combining the offices of county attorney. All in all, the far east corner of Montana is right in the middle of local government reform activity.

2. The Virginia City (pop. 149) study commission is seriously thinking about proposing the town meeting.

3. Consolidation of the Dawson County sheriff's department and the Glendive police was discussed at a joint meeting of the city and county study commission. County Attorney Richard Simonton told the group that he favored the consolidation because it could produce more efficient and effective services. Gary Olson, director of law enforcement at Dawson College, said that consolidation may be an administrative help and might work in Glendive because of the past record of cooperation between law enforcement agencies. Both Olson and Simonton mentioned that consolidation would improve law enforcement services in the rural area.

4. The Ravalli County and Hamilton study commissioners are talking about the consolidation of such services as road and street repair, law enforcement and purchasing.

5. The Shelby, Sunburst city and the Toole county study commission met with A. Laurence Peterson from the state office of the Board of Crime Control to discuss the possible unification of all the law enforcement activities of the area. Peterson pointed out that the Toole County community already has a joint use of communications and detention facilities and said that a single system of record keeping for the two departments would be a good area for further cooperation. The commission might conduct a survey of citizen attitudes on law enforcement.

6. The Granite County study commission is considering recommending that the office of County Superintendent of Schools be eliminated.

7. The Powell County study commission is asking the Deer Lodge County study commission to consider changing its name. The city of Deer Lodge is not in Deer Lodge County but in Powell County but people not familiar with the area often get that confused. Terry Mannix, chairperson for the Powell County commission, points out that the city of Deer Lodge antedates the county, and that a change in Deer Lodge County's name would eliminate much confusion.

8. Study commissioners in several of the large counties--Yellowstone, Cascade, Missoula, Silver Bow and Deer Lodge--have jointly contracted with the Arthur D. Little company of San Francisco to provide assistance in drafting charter provisions to deal with the complicated problem of differential taxing and service districts. Thomas Fletcher will represent the consulting firm in an initial visit to the state during the week of January 27-31.

9. Blanche Blum and Darrell Coombs of the Wheatland County study commission reviewed their tentative charter with members of the State Commission staff in Helena.

10. Richland County has drafted a preliminary charter calling for a "tri-manager" system. Most of the county government would be administered by a general manager accountable to the county commissioners. But the sheriff and treasurer would remain independently elected and separately accountable to the county commissioners for their budgets.

11. The Granite High School senior government class in Philipsburg has conducted interviews with city officials, studied city government, formed a mock study commission and made alternative form recommendations to the Philipsburg study commission.

DECISIONS: VOTER REVIEW



This column, which will appear monthly, lists decisions made thus far by study commissions on alternative forms. These decisions may be modified by public input before the final report is written.

TOWNSEND: commission-manager / COLUMBIA FALLS: disincorporation / PRAIRIE COUNTY: commission-chairman / TWIN BRIDGES: commission-executive / HILL COUNTY: commission-manager / HAVRE: commission-manager, self-government powers / MILES CITY: commission-manager, non-partisan elections / KALISPELL: commission-manager / WHEATLAND COUNTY: charter, manager / BILLINGS: charter, city administrator / YELLOWSTONE COUNTY: charter, county administrator / ANACONDA-DEER LODGE COUNTY: unification, charter, commission-manager, partisan elections / LEWIS and CLARK COUNTY: charter, commission-manager / HELENA: charter, commission-manager / BOZEMAN: commission-manager, self-government powers, election of mayor / MISSOULA-MISSOULA COUNTY: unification, charter, county administrator / BUTTE-SILVER BOW COUNTY: unification, charter, commission-executive / WHITEFISH: charter, manager / MANHATTAN: town meeting / TERRY: charter, town meeting.

REMEMBER: STUDY COMMISSIONS MUST HAVE TENTATIVE REPORTS DRAFTED, ADOPTED AND PRINTED BY JUNE 1, 1976

*THE FINAL REPORT MUST BE ADOPTED BY AUGUST 1, 1976;
THE FINAL REPORT PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED BY OCTOBER 3, 1976*

If your study commission has made a decision we don't know about, write Arnold Malina, State Commission on Local Government, Capitol Station, Helena, Montana 59601. Phone 449-2814. Articles on your study commission will also be appreciated.

HILL COUNTY UNANIMOUS ON MANAGER

The Hill County study commission voted unanimously to propose the commission-manager form with self-government powers as their alternative. Under the proposed form, commissioners will be elected to serve four year terms, each to be elected from a district by the voters of that district only; three will be elected every two years and two every two years. Elections will be conducted on a non-partisan basis.

According to Chairman Lyle Anderson, the commission decided on the manager form because "potential industry and development resulting in population increase will point up the need for professional management and financial planning for local government; therefore, by providing for the services of a manager at this time, Hill County will be in a better position to plan for these needs before they arise."

Focus on the Manager

Thus far, numerous county and municipal study commissions have decided to propose the Commission-Manager form of government. Many more are leaning toward this form. The following counties have proposed the Manager plan: Yellowstone, Missoula City-County, Lewis and Clark, Flathead, Wheatland, Deer Lodge-Anaconda, Hill, Petroleum. The following counties are seriously thinking about the manager plan: Chouteau, Golden Valley, Richland, Sanders, Daniels, Park, Teton, Big Horn. This comprises over 45% of the total county population.

The following municipalities have proposed the Manager plan: Townsend, Billings, Kalispell, Miles City, Whitefish, Havre, Great Falls, Bozeman, Helena. The following are leaning toward proposing the Manager form: Libby, Hamilton, Plentywood, Lewistown, Scobey and Glendive. This comprises over 64% of the total municipal population not including the cities of Missoula and Anaconda which are listed under the counties since they are involved in consolidation plans.

Study commissioners frequently ask questions about the commission-manager plan: What are average salaries? Are certain features absolutely necessary? While traditionally the manager plan has been associated with non-partisan, at-large elections of 5 member councils which choose the mayor from their own number, other combinations are possible. The International City Management Association (ICMA) has found that in given localities, non-partisan elections, single member districts, councils of varying size, and direct election of the mayor work well too.

ICMA lists 6 essential features of the manager form: (1) the process for the appointment or removal of an overall professional administrator who has the authority to: (2) exercise direction and control of the on-going activities of the various departments; (3) appoint, discipline and terminate municipal employees; (4) prepare the budget; (5) execute the budget; and (6) recommend policy to the governing body. Beyond these six "essentials," ICMA feels much variation is possible.

Manager salaries: Salaries of managers vary greatly, even with similar-size cities. The El Reno, Oklahoma (pop. 15,000) manager salary is \$14,800, while Woodlake, California (pop. 3,000) also pays their manager \$14,800. Remember, many factors can affect salary: location, environment, etc. The following 1975 statistics come from the ICMA:

CITIES		COUNTIES	
Population Group	Average Salary	Population Group	Average Salary
Under 2,500	\$12,627	Under 2,500	\$ 9,170
2,500 - 4,999	\$14,142	2,500 - 4,999	\$10,364
5,000 - 9,999	\$16,644	5,000 - 9,999	\$12,834
10,000 - 24,999	\$21,041	10,000 - 24,999	\$14,858
25,000 - 49,999	\$25,322	25,000 - 49,999	\$17,941
50,000 - 99,999	\$30,282	50,000 - 99,999	\$20,074

DO YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION ON MANAGERS? WRITE:

Laurence Rutter
International City Management
Association
1140 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(Phone) 202-293-2200

Florence Zeller
National Association of Counties
1735 New York Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20006
(Phone) 202-785-9577

SCOBEEY CONDUCTS MANAGER SURVEY

The Scobey study commission, which is considering the manager form, conducted a survey on towns and cities with a manager council form of government. Twenty-five cities were contacted in the survey, most of which were similar in size to Scobey (pop. 1,480). The salaries of the manager in these cities contacted ranged from \$12,000 to \$25,000. According to chairperson Mrs. Theolyn Tong, all cities reporting said that a large majority of their citizens "well accepted" the manager form.

CONSOLIDATION APPROVED IN ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Study commissions with innovative proposals can be encouraged by the success of local government reform in other parts of the country. A good example is the consolidation between the county and city of Anchorage, Alaska which passed on September 9th. A 60% majority approved the plan consolidating the separate governments under a single government with a strong mayor and legislative assembly.

Douglas G. Weiford, who was appointed Manager of the consolidated government by the Mayor, says of the consolidation: "I know of no precedence in the United States in terms of the scale and totality of the merger. There is now one government--no city, no borough, no county, just the Municipality of Anchorage. It embraces about 180,000 people and includes some 1,900 square miles. The population, by conservative estimate, is expected to double in about 10 years..."

A NOTE ON EARLY ELECTIONS

If an early election date is chosen, study commissions should be aware that certain "certificates" must be filed in time for clerks to follow the election schedule for the close of registration, printing notices of the special election, and printing the ballot. This means the "certificate establishing the election date" must be filed 60 days before the election, and the "certificate establishing the form of the ballot" must be filed at least 40 days before the election.

YOU SHOULD TELL THE CLERK AND RECORDER WHEN YOU PLAN TO HOLD YOUR ELECTION.

We're running out of cartoons on a local government theme. If you know of any, we'd appreciate receiving them. If you have a local government cartoon idea, we can get a cartoonist to sketch it.



SO HE SAID, "I DIG, MAN, HOME RULE MEANS DO YOUR OWN THING. GROOVY!"

TWIN BRIDGES TO HOLD FIRST VOTER REVIEW ELECTION

The Twin Bridges study commission has decided to hold the election on its proposed alternative form of government on April 6th, 1976. According to commission chairperson, Marie McAlear, the commission will make its tentative report available February 1st, hold the required public hearing on March 2nd, and distribute the final report on March 7th.

Their proposed form modifies the present commission executive form in three ways: they will ask for the at-large election of council-members, ask that the council have a role in the supervision of departments, and that the council have a role in budget preparation.

STATE COMMISSION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT WINTER WORKSHOPS Workshops scheduled from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

1. HOW TO WRITE TENTATIVE AND FINAL REPORTS

In Helena: Saturday, February 7th at Carroll College-downstairs
in Carroll Commons

In Glendive: Saturday, February 21st at Dawson College

2. PUBLIC INFORMATION: TAKING YOUR PROPOSAL TO THE VOTERS

In Helena: Saturday, March 13th, at the Colonial (Executive
Conference Room)

In Glendive: Saturday, March 20th at Dawson College

Please invite the chairperson of your public information task force
or other citizens' group to the March workshops.

VOTER REVIEW

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